For discussion **EC(2024-25)12**
on 12 February 2025

ITEM FOR ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

HEAD 186 – TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT
Subhead 000 Operational expenses

Members are invited to recommend to the Finance Committee the creation of the following permanent posts in the Transport Department with immediate effect upon approval of the Finance Committee –

2 Government Engineer
(D2) ($194,825 - $212,900)

to be offset by the deletion of the following permanent posts –

2 Assistant Commissioner for Transport
(D2) ($194,825 - $212,900)

PROBLEM

The Transport Department (TD) needs to re-grade the directorate posts of the Urban Regional Offices (URO) and Technical Services Branch (TSB) to cope with the increasing need for the post-holders to possess professional knowledge in traffic engineering and technology and the relevant duties so as to address present and future developments and challenges facing TD.

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PROPOSAL

2. We propose to re-grade two permanent Assistant Commissioner for Transport (AC for T) (D2) posts of the Transport Officer (TO) grade to permanent Government Engineer (GE) (D2) posts of the Engineer grade. The relevant proposal involved the creation of two permanent GE posts, which will be offset by the deletion of two permanent AC for T posts.

JUSTIFICATION

Organisation of TD

3. TD is headed by the Commissioner for Transport (D6), who is underpinned by two Deputy Commissioners for Transport (D3), eight AC for Ts (D2) and one Safety Director (D2-equivalent non-civil service position). Currently, among the eight ACs for T posts in TD, six are pitched at the AC for T rank of the TO grade (including two permanent posts proposed to be deleted) while the remaining two are pitched at the GE rank of the Engineer grade. The organisation chart is at Enclosure 1.

Encl. 1

4. Given the professional requirements for the post-holders due to the nature of the posts, two permanent AC for T posts of the TO grade (designated as Assistant Commissioner/Urban (AC/U) and Assistant Commissioner/Technical Services (AC/TS)) have been temporarily filled by Engineer grade officers since 1980s. The division of responsibilities among the respective divisions under the aforesaid directorate officers ensures an optimal organisational structure to support the effective operation of TD.

5. Over the years, the work of TD has become increasingly diversified and complex. TD conducted a review in recent years on the directorate support for TD in the medium to long term, with a view to meeting the development of and challenges facing TD. The review recommended that TD should re-grade the two permanent AC for T posts to two permanent GE posts and be filled by officers of the Engineer grade so as to better reflect the professional qualifications required for the business of the posts.

6. The TO grade and the Engineer grade are TD's lynchpin grades. With their unique areas of professional knowledge and expertise, the two grades have worked in concerted efforts by combining their knowledge and skills in different areas and providing quality and efficient services to the public. For Engineers, their professional qualifications and experiences enable them to apply their professional

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knowledge and experiences, provide professional services, facilitate the development of transport-related infrastructure and enhance traffic safety in areas such as traffic and civil engineering, information technology and innovative transport technologies, and at the project planning, design, review and implementation levels. For TOs, they apply their extensive transport management experiences in providing key services in the areas of managing, monitoring and reviewing public transport facilities, assessing public transport operations and determining transport fares, planning transport services for persons with disabilities, operating the Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre and handling traffic and transport emergencies. In deciding the suitable grade to head a specific branch, TD will take into account the functions of the branch, the required expertise of the branch head and the overall management requirements of TD.

7. In line with the above principles and having regard to the responsibilities of the two posts of AC/U and AC/TS, we propose to regularise the arrangement of filling the above two AC for T posts by Engineer grade officers and re-grade the two permanent AC for T posts to two permanent GE posts. Detailed considerations are set out in paragraphs 8 to 16 below.

Roles of AC/U

8. In TD, there are two Regional Offices responsible for handling district traffic and transport matters, namely URO and the New Territories Regional Offices (NTRO). URO takes charge of traffic and transport related matters in urban areas including Hong Kong Island and Kowloon, whilst NTRO takes charge of traffic and transport related matters in the New Territories, and the two Regional Offices are headed by AC/U and the Assistant Commissioner/New Territories (AC/NT) respectively. At present, the AC/U post is temporarily filled by an Engineer grade officer while the AC/NT post is filled by a TO grade officer. URO performs the following functions –

(a) overseeing the traffic and transport matters in urban areas, including arrangements for facilitating mega events in districts;

(b) provision of traffic engineering and transport management services;

(c) planning and implementation of road infrastructure and pedestrian facilities;

(d) monitoring and management of urban traffic conditions and implementation of traffic management measures to cope with the latest traffic situations; and

/(e) …..

(e) planning and implementation of public transport services and related public transport facilities.

Encl. 2 The job description of the AC/U post is at Enclosure 2.

9. Apart from the above-mentioned functions, AC/U oversees traffic and transport matters in urban areas, and coordinates inputs from various branches of TD to facilitate housing and land supply as well as major project developments. Over the years, AC/U has led URO in participating in planning and implementing various major road infrastructure projects, including the Eastern Harbour Crossing, Western Harbour Crossing, Island Eastern Corridor Link, Hung Hom Bypass, Central-Wan Chai Bypass, and Cross Bay Link in Tseung Kwan O, etc. To create a pedestrian-friendly environment and enhance pedestrian safety, AC/U has implemented various pedestrian environment improvement schemes in recent years. Furthermore, AC/U attends the Metro Planning Committee Meetings of the Town Planning Board on behalf of TD to review the Traffic Impact Assessments of various development projects, provides traffic and transport inputs on development proposals and urban planning matters, and formulates appropriate traffic management measures in accordance with the latest traffic conditions in urban districts in order to facilitate urban planning and development.

10. The government policy of increasing land and housing supply in recent years has also brought an increase in the transport planning-related work. AC/U actively provides transport planning inputs on land supply initiatives (such as various urban renewal projects in recent years), oversees the related Traffic Impact Assessments, implements appropriate transport facilities and road improvement works. Looking ahead, AC/U has to continue to lead URO in overseeing traffic and transport matters in urban areas, implementing traffic management measures, providing traffic and transport inputs on various major development projects (including the Kai Tak Sports Park, the redevelopment of Choi Hung Estate and Wah Fu Estate and the development of the Northern Metropolis), and reviewing Traffic Impact Assessments to ensure smooth implementation and delivery of development projects.

Need for Re-grading the AC/U Post to a GE Post

11. Given the similarity of the work nature and functions of the two Regional Offices, both, in principle, can be headed by either a TO or an Engineer grade officer. Regardless of the grade, the two ACs of the Regional Offices have to lead officers from both TO and Engineer grades who possess knowledge of their own professional areas as mentioned in paragraph 6 above. Both ACs are required to coordinate and establish rapport among officers from the two grades in their respective offices to make concerted efforts in serving the public.

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12. The existing arrangement of filling the AC/NT post by a TO grade officer and the AC/U post by an Engineer grade officer has facilitated the TD senior management in assigning tasks to the two ACs effectively and flexibly, taking into consideration of their different experiences and expertise. For instance, AC/U could handle cross-district tasks that require more traffic engineering knowledge (including reviewing Traffic Impact Assessments and providing inputs for traffic works, e.g. transport planning of the Northern Metropolis), while AC/NT could take up tasks that require more knowledge in transport management services (including coordinating transport services for new boundary control points and liaising with relevant Mainland authorities, management of duties relating to cross boundary vehicles and container truck drivers, etc.). In view of the above, we consider that by filling the AC/NT post with a TO grade officer and the AC/U post with an Engineer grade officer, the structures of the two Regional Offices will be more balanced and complementary to each other. We thus propose to rationalise the arrangement by re-grading the AC/U post, a permanent AC for T post of the TO grade, to a permanent GE post of the Engineer grade.

Roles of AC/TS

13. TSB is currently headed by AC/TS and the post is temporarily filled by an Engineer grade officer. TSB performs the following functions –

(a) operation and maintenance of the Area Traffic Control (ATC) system and the Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system, implementation of the real-time adaptive traffic signal system pilot project and installation of traffic enforcement cameras;

(b) formulation and implementation of smart mobility initiatives and continuous enhancement of Transport Information System and TD's mobile application;

(c) formulation and review of road safety policies and standards;

(d) implementation of road safety initiatives and road safety audit; and

(e) implementation of Smart Traffic Fund.

Encl. 3 The job description of the AC/TS post is at Enclosure 3.

14. The above functions involve long-term ongoing tasks, which require relevant experiences, including professional traffic engineering knowledge, in-depth IT-related knowledge and experiences in innovative transport technologies. Under the leadership of AC/TS, TSB has endeavoured to apply appropriate technologies and techniques in developing transport infrastructure facilities, improving the travelling experience of Hong Kong citizens and enhancing road safety. Its work included the expansion and improvement of the ATC system in 1980s and 1990s, and installation and proper maintenance and upgrade of CCTV systems at major junctions to monitor traffic conditions, so that the signalised junctions are continuously operated in coordination, and TD operators can monitor the traffic conditions and make responses as necessary in a timely manner to reduce congestion and delay. On enhancing road safety, apart from regularly analysing traffic accident statistics for formulating road safety strategy, directions of publicity and education and traffic improvement measures, AC/TS has also led the team in delivering various road safety related initiatives, e.g. introduction of legislative amendments for enhancing road safety, updating strategic route and exit numbers as well as standards of traffic facilities, introduction of a road safety audit system, etc. In addition, AC/TS set up the Smart Mobility Division in 2018 as the driving force for deploying innovative technologies to improve traffic efficiency and road safety in Hong Kong, as well as assisted in formulating the "Smart Mobility Roadmap for Hong Kong" in 2019 and followed up on the implementation of relevant strategies, including the successful implementation of the free-flow tolling system, HKeToll, the trial and pilot use of autonomous vehicles, Traffic Data Analytics System, "HKeMobility" mobile application, Smart Traffic Fund, etc. to promote and enhance smart mobility development in Hong Kong.

Need for Re-grading the AC/TS Post to a GE Post

15. Looking ahead, AC/TS will continue to lead TSB in launching more initiatives to facilitate commuting of the public, including the enhancement of traffic control equipment in a timely manner, and the testing and implementation of real-time adaptive traffic signal system, etc. On promoting smart mobility development, AC/TS will strive to enhance traffic data application by centralising data and streamlining the data analytics processes, thereby achieving intelligent traffic management in Hong Kong, and promoting a paradigm shift of traffic management "from detection to prediction" and "from responding to preventing". On enhancing road safety, AC/TS will continue to lead the team in taking forward legislative amendments relating to road safety, as well as replacing the Belisha beacons at zebra crossings on public roads and so forth.

16. Given the highly technical functions of TSB, and considering that the majority of the staff in the branch are from the Engineer grade and Technical Officer grade, AC/TS must possess highly professional knowledge and expertise in engineering, information technology and advanced intelligent transport infrastructure technologies in order to lead TSB effectively and enhance the smooth operation of TD. We thus propose to rationalise the arrangement by re-grading the AC/TS post, a permanent AC for T post of the TO grade, to a permanent GE post of the Engineer grade.

NON-DIRECTORATE SUPPORT

17. As at 1 January 2025, there are 174 non-directorate civil service posts in URO headed by AC/U, and 163 non-directorate civil service posts in TSB headed by AC/TS. The total number of non-directorate civil service posts in URO and TSB will remain unchanged and the staff members holding these posts will continue to support the daily operation of URO and TSB.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

18. We have critically examined the possibility of filling the AC/U and AC/TS posts with TO grade officers. In view of the increasing need for the holders of the two posts to possess professional knowledge in traffic engineering and technology to cope with the present and future challenges, and given the proven smooth operation of TD under the arrangement of filling the said posts with Engineer grade officers over the years, we consider the proposal to re-grade the permanent AC for T posts of URO and TSB of TD to permanent GE posts appropriate. In view of the foregoing, we also consider that it is not necessary to re-grade these two posts to bi-disciplinary permanent posts for Engineer grade or TO grade officers.

19. We have also critically examined whether the duties of the proposed GE posts could be absorbed by the other existing GEs in TD. It is considered operationally unviable as the other GEs in TD are already fully occupied with the duties under their purview and it would be difficult for them to absorb additional duties without compromising the effectiveness in delivering their own duties or the quality of services. The main duties and responsibilities of other GE (D2) posts in TD are at Enclosure 4.

Encl. 4

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

20. The proposed creation of two permanent GE posts to be offset by the deletion of two permanent AC for T posts is cost neutral.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

21. We consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Transport on the above re-grading proposal on 21 June 2024. Members supported the submission of the proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee for consideration. As for some members' suggestion to re-grade the two posts to bi-disciplinary posts so that they can be filled by both Engineer grade and TO grade officers, we have elaborated the relevant considerations on the re-grading proposal in paragraphs 4 to 7 and 18 above.

ESTABLISHMENT CHANGES

22. The establishment changes of TD in the past three years are as follows –

Establishment (Note)	**Number of posts**			
	Existing (As at 1 January 2025)	**As at 1 April 2024**	**As at 1 April 2023**	**As at 1 April 2022**
A	32+(4)	32+(4)	32+(4)	32+(3)
B	460	451	451	452
C	1 419	1 417	1 420	1 415
Total	**1 911+(4)**	**1 900+(4)**	**1 903+(4)**	**1 899+(3)**

Note –

A – ranks in the directorate pay scale or equivalent

B – non-directorate ranks, the maximum pay point of which is above Master Pay Scale (MPS) Point 33 or equivalent

C – non-directorate ranks, the maximum pay point of which is at or below MPS Point 33 or equivalent

( ) – number of time-limited supernumerary directorate posts[Note] approved by the Finance Committee

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[Note] The civil service establishment includes posts on the permanent establishment and those on the non-permanent establishment (i.e. time-limited posts). Time-limited directorate posts are referred to as "supernumerary directorate posts", which are time-limited directorate posts on the non-permanent establishment. It does not mean they are not counted towards the establishment.

COMMENTS FROM THE CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU

23. The Civil Service Bureau supports the creation of two permanent GE posts to be offset by deleting two permanent AC for T posts in TD. The grading and ranking of the proposed posts are considered appropriate having regard to the level and scope of responsibilities to be taken up by the staff of the posts concerned.

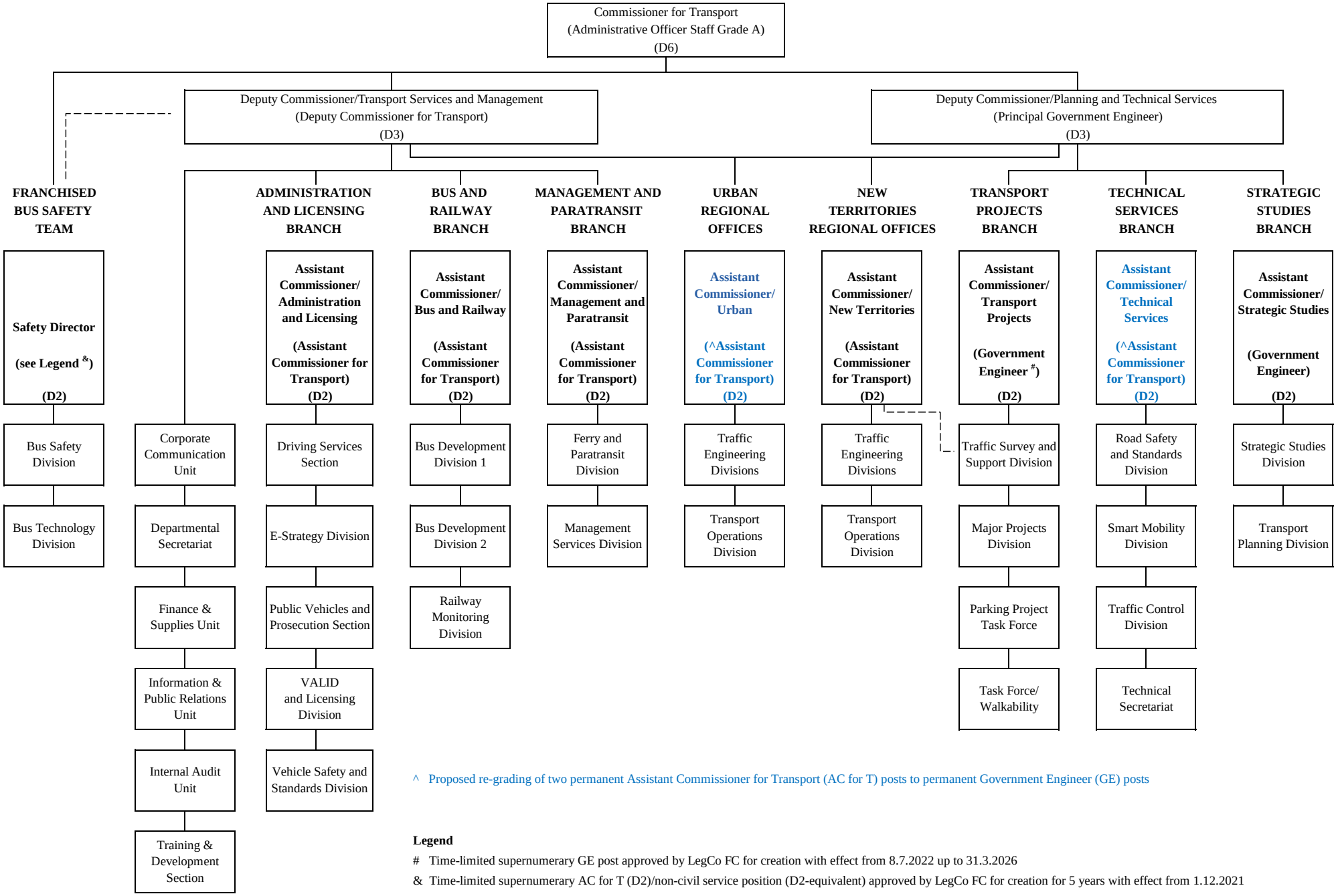
24. As the two permanent AC for T posts have been included in the establishment, re-grading the two posts to two permanent GE posts will not additionally increase the overall establishment of the civil service.

ADVICE OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DIRECTORATE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

25. The Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service has advised that the ranking proposed for the posts and the proposal to re-grade them to the Engineer grade are appropriate.

Transport and Logistics Bureau
Transport Department
February 2025

Organisation Chart of Transport Department



^ Proposed re-grading of two permanent Assistant Commissioner for Transport (AC for T) posts to permanent Government Engineer (GE) posts

Legend

\# Time-limited supernumerary GE post approved by LegCo FC for creation with effect from 8.7.2022 up to 31.3.2026

& Time-limited supernumerary AC for T (D2)/non-civil service position (D2-equivalent) approved by LegCo FC for creation for 5 years with effect from 1.12.2021

Enclosure 2 to EC(2024-25)12

Assistant Commissioner/Urban
Job Description

Rank : Government Engineer (D2)

Responsible to : Deputy Commissioner/Planning and Technical Services (D3) and Deputy Commissioner/Transport Services and Management (D3)

Major Duties and Responsibilities –

1. To supervise the day-to-day operation of the Traffic Engineering (Hong Kong) Division, Traffic Engineering (Kowloon) Division and Transport Operations (Urban) Division;

2. To direct and supervise traffic and transport matters in urban areas;

3. To direct and supervise traffic engineering and transport operational services;

4. To oversee the planning and implementation of road infrastructure, pedestrian facilities, public transport services and related public transport facilities;

5. To oversee the monitoring and management of urban traffic conditions and implementation of traffic management measures to cope with the latest traffic situations; and

6. To coordinate Transport Department's inputs on land supply initiatives and oversee Traffic Impact Assessment studies to facilitate housing and land supply and implementation of various major developments.

Enclosure 3 to EC(2024-25)12

Assistant Commissioner/Technical Services
Job Description

Rank : Government Engineer (D2)

Responsible to : Deputy Commissioner/Planning and Technical Services (D3)

Major Duties and Responsibilities –

1. To supervise the day-to-day operation of the Traffic Control Division, Smart Mobility Division, Road Safety and Standards Division and Technical Secretariat;

2. To direct and supervise activities in relation to the formulation and implementation of smart mobility development strategy, formulation and implementation of smart mobility initiatives, and the continuous enhancement of Transport Information System and Transport Department's mobile application;

3. To direct and supervise activities in relation to the operation and maintenance of Area Traffic Control and Closed Circuit Television systems, the development of real-time adaptive traffic signal system and installation of traffic enforcement cameras;

4. To oversee the formulation and review of road safety policies and standards, conducting road safety researches, implementing road safety initiatives and road safety audit; and

5. To supervise the implementation of the Smart Traffic Fund to promote research and application of vehicle-related innovation and technology, and develop a traffic data analytics system in collaboration with the Digital Policy Office.

Main Duties and Responsibilities of Other Government Engineer Posts (D2) in the Transport Department

1. Assistant Commissioner/Strategic Studies (AC/SS) heads the Strategic Studies Branch. With the directorate support of two Chief Engineers (D1), AC/SS is responsible for –

   (i) directing the conduct of the Traffic and Transport Strategy Study, including formulation of the four key directions, namely, to optimise the use of limited road space, provide people-centric and efficient public transport services, advocate green and active transport as healthy lifestyles, and enhance the transport connectivity with other cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area by the development of various transport strategies and initiatives;

   (ii) planning the conduct of a territory-wide Travel Characteristics Survey and enhancing the Comprehensive Transport Study Model;

   (iii) providing inputs and support for formulating macro transport management policies and strategies; and

   (iv) providing traffic engineering inputs and support throughout the design, construction and commissioning process of large-scale development projects.

2. Assistant Commissioner/Transport Projects (AC/TP) heads the Transport Projects Branch. With the directorate support of two Chief Engineers (D1), AC/TP is responsible for –

   (i) conducting traffic and transport surveys;

   (ii) planning and formulating the Incident Management Strategy and System;

   (iii) planning and designing road layouts;

   (iv) overseeing the planning and implementation of new highway projects;

   (v) implementing major transport infrastructure (including new strategic roads and new rail links);

/(vi) …..

(vi) providing traffic engineering and traffic management inputs for the planning, design and implementation of new railway schemes and major road projects;

(vii) vetting and monitoring traffic diversion schemes and other traffic issues arising from the implementation of railway and road schemes as well as handling complaints;

(viii) implementing new initiatives under the concept of "Walk in HK" and assisting in formulating and developing the walkability policy; and

(ix) formulating cycling policy, including the improvement and upgrading of cycling infrastructure.
